

# DREF operation update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Uganda: Food Insecurity in Karamoja- Appeal Extension

DREF operation n° MDRUG011  
GLIDE n° OT-2008-000164-UGA  
Update n° 01  
14 April 2009

The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

**Period covered by this update:** 20 September 2008 to 30 March 2009.

**Summary:** CHF 191,839 (USD 182,704 or EUR 117,333) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 20 September 2008 to support the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) in delivering assistance to some 33,939 beneficiaries, or to replenish disaster preparedness stocks. The URCS is implementing a three month project in Karamoja supported by the Federation through a DREF funding.

This intervention is a follow up of an assessment conducted by URCS in August 2008 which confirmed that about 33,939 people in Kotido and Abim districts in Uganda were then facing acute food insecurity. Many parts of Karamoja have been described as chronically food insecure for the past five years due to a combination of factors including recurrent drought, over population and declining resource base for agro-pastoralist.

A total of 5,000 households (25,000 beneficiaries) who are critically vulnerable from Kotido and Abim districts have been identified amongst the affected population to benefit from the provision of seeds and agricultural tools to enable them to cope with food insecurity.

This operation was expected to be implemented over three (3) months starting 20 September 2008, and be completed by 20 December 2008. However, due to the delay of the rains to kick start the seeds distribution as well as the delay of the World Food Programme (WFP) to supply food aid due to food shortages in the country, the operation has been extended until the end of April 2009. A Final Report will be issued by the end of July 2009.

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## The situation

The 2008 rains in Karamoja Region were erratic and caused uncertainty amongst the farming population. For example, in first season of 2008, Abim and Kotido districts experienced their first rains in late May 2008 while the second rains came in late August 2008. Normal rains for this area occur from March to June. This confused farmers to the extent that most of them who had seeds could not plant due to uncertainty of the weather conditions. The metrological department predicted a dry season from November 2008 to the end of February 2009. Worse still, the predicted rains could not come and are expected by mid April 2009. The Food Security and Agricultural Livelihood (FSAL) working group chaired by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the Office of the Prime Minister in charge of disasters, issued an alert that communities in the Karamoja Region were likely to starve due to poor harvest and late rains.

As a consequence of this situation, many agencies that had planned to distribute seeds had to put this activity on hold until the end of February 2009. The fact that most people in the area still depend on World Food Programme (WFP) food distributions which is not enough and had delayed to reach the URCS targeted communities, URCS had fears that if the seeds were distributed at this time, then it was clear that no planting will take place; the beneficiaries would eat or sell them. However, some preparatory activities have been carried out.

## Coordination and partnerships

The Uganda Red Cross Society staff involved in the project are already on the ground and participating in the Food Security cluster meetings in the area. So far they have attended three Food Security meetings with district production staff and FSAL partners in the region. The DREF-funded project was introduced to the district leaders during the FSAL meetings. It was welcomed as a timely intervention by the members. Other critical issues that came from discussions were:

- The shortage of food in the region which called for WFP to increase food aid to the region.
- The Food Security and Agricultural Livelihood agencies need to plan and stock seeds during dry season in preparation for the planting season which has delayed due to the prolonged dry spell
- There was need for a rapid inter-agency Food Security assessment under the guidance of the District Production Officer (DPO). This has since been carried out and URCS staff were among other FSAL members to analyze the Food Security crisis in the area. This was successfully done and a report has been issued.

The recommendations from the meetings included:

- The agencies and NGOs that had seeds should not distribute them for the moment because they would not be planted and there was fear that they would be eaten given the existing lack of food in the area.
- The seed distribution schedule should be in line with WFP food distribution so that beneficiaries will be with food by the time they receive seeds for planting.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

### Progress towards objectives<sup>1</sup>

#### Relief distributions

**Objective 1: To revive the livelihood options of 5,000 agricultural households, through the distribution of emergency seeds and tools for the first planting season of 2009.**

#### Activities planned

- Procurement of planting material (Sorghum, maize, beans, cassava and vegetable seeds).
- Carry out community mobilization and sensitization on the Project Implementation Plan (PIP).
- Registration and verification of the internally displaced persons in the resettlement camps.
- Formation of seed committees at parish level.
- Transportation and distribution of planting material to target beneficiaries.
- Procurement and distribution of agricultural tools (hand hoes, machetes, axes, sickles and rakes).

#### Progress

The National Society has completed the process of procuring the seeds and tools for 5,000 beneficiaries. A total of 5,000 household kits have been procured. The kit consists of 3kgs of sorghum, 3kgs of beans and 3kgs of maize as well as a vegetable kit consisting of 20gms of egg plant, onions, kale and Amaranths (*Dodo* and *Okra*). The agricultural tool kit consists of 1 panga, 2 hoes, 1 sickle and an axe. These items will be distributed when the time is right.

Community mobilization and sensitization among the target population has been done. This was carried out through FSAL cluster meetings, meetings with District Agriculture Officers (DAOs) and discussions with beneficiaries. Registration of potential beneficiaries has since been completed. However, the number of people to reach is far more than the available kits. This means that further screening will have to be undertaken to get to the 5,000 households that were initially planned for.

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<sup>1</sup> Some objectives and planned activities have been slightly revised to take into account the prevailing situation

At parish level, the formation of seed committees has been completed and several members are participating in the mobilization and sensitization of the community regarding the distribution. Selection of target areas in both districts has been concluded. This was done in coordination with the district agriculture officers, sub county extension workers and the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) office in Kotido District. The areas identified are: Nyakwae and Arelek sub counties of Abim District as well as Kacheri and Nakapelimoru sub counties of Kotido District.

The transportation of agricultural inputs to the targeted areas has been accomplished. So far, all the pangas, hoes, sickles and axes have been delivered to the Kotido warehouse. The seeds will be transported when the planting season is approaching. The season has delayed due to the prolonged drought and it is predicted that rains will start by mid April 2009. The seed distribution will take place along with the general food distribution as planned.

Community-Based Volunteers (CBVs) were selected with the help of community members/leaders in Nyakwae and Kacheri sub counties of Abim and Kotido districts respectively. These volunteers have been trained in seeds management and monitoring.

**Objective 2: To conduct baseline survey and collect detailed and up-to-date information about the food insecurity situation of the vulnerable people in Abim and Kotido districts for long term Food Security programming.**

**Activities planned**

- Deployment of one Food Security expert to provide technical support in the baseline (for one month).
- Mobilizing staff and volunteers for baselines survey.

**Progress**

An external consultant was assigned to design, administer and analyze the data collected from the two sampled areas of Nyakwae sub county of Abim District and Kacheri sub county of Kotido District targeting 500 households. With the help of the Federation eastern African Zone Office (EAZO), baseline survey tools were developed and used to collect the raw data from the selected areas after orienting selected volunteers at field level. Information was collected at household level, from key informants as well as from secondary data.

In collaboration with the external consultant, staff working in the region have selected and oriented the volunteers to participate in the start up activities of the project. Those who participated in the survey were trained in data collection using the local language but interpreting it in English language. The baseline was carried out and a final report has since been issued. This has in turn led to the development of the final proposal for Karamoja long term Food Security initiative (2009-2012).

Due to the continued delay of the rains in Karamoja and the delay of WFP distribution of food aid, some activities have been halted. This included the distribution of seeds and tools to the targeted communities of Abim and Kotido districts.

Most of the activities have already been implemented including the formation and training of the seed committees as well as the registration and verification of beneficiaries. Distribution of cards is ongoing awaiting seeds and tools distribution planned for 3-7 April 2009. According to the Uganda weather forecast, the rains are supposed to have started by then. A post distribution evaluation will be carried out, fifteen days after the distribution, to determine the germination rate.

<b>How we work</b>	
All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the <a href="#"><u>Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief</u></a> and is committed to the <a href="#"><u>Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response</u></a> (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.	
The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".	<b>Global Agenda Goals:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.</li> <li>• Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.</li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.</li><li>• Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.</li></ul> |
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